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AUTHOR Miller, Marsha Lee
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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the use of drama in the foreign language classroom looks at the three common ways it is used: (1) the dramatic teacher, or methods in which the teacher's dramatic behavior involves the students in interesting communicative situations; (2) creative drama, in which activities focus on the students' involvement in spontaneous dramatic enactments stressing both verbal and nonverbal skills; and (3) foreign language theater, using scripts, formal acting, directing, and play production. The review looks at techniques and procedures suggested by specialists in each area and discusses the use of specific language skills, adjustment for age and skill level, and related research. A bibliography is included. (MSE)

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USING DRAMA TO TEACH FOREIGN LANGUAGES

by

MARSHA LEE MILLER, B.A., B.S.

REPORT

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Foreign Language Education

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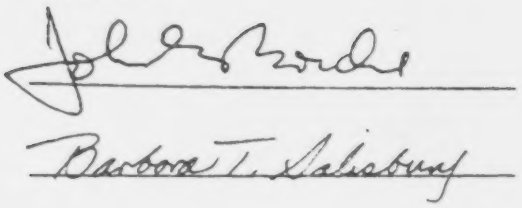

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Marsha Lee Miller
Residence Chikusa #1006
1-5-11 Imaike, Chikusa-ku
Nagoya 464

THREE WAYS TO USE DRAMA IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

There are three common ways to use drama in foreign language classrooms:

1) The Dramatic Teacher. John Rassias' "Dartmouth Method" and other similar methods utilize a dramatic teacher as a means of involving the students in interesting communicative situations.

2) Creative Drama. The activities in this category focus on the students' involvement in spontaneous dramatic enactments. Both verbal and non-verbal communication skills are stressed.

3) Foreign Language Theater. The use of scripts, formal acting, direction and play production characterize the activities in this category. I'll cover procedures suggested by Richard Via and other foreign language theater specialists.

I'll discuss the use of specific language skills, how to adjust for age and skill levels, and related research. A bibliography will be provided.

Introduction

For centuries, foreign language teaching methods reflected the needs of students who, for academic purposes, needed to read and translate foreign texts. As international travel and commerce became more and more common, it became apparent that these traditional methods were failing to provide students with the skills they needed to actually communicate with other people in a foreign language. Over the past several decades, new methods have been designed that not only reflect the need for communicative skills, but also reflect a variety of perspectives on the psychology of learning. Language learning methods based on behaviorist psychology, cognitive psychology and more recently humanistic psychology have all contributed to what is now known about meeting the language learner's needs. One interesting outcome of the development of foreign language teaching methods is the inclusion of drama in the language learning process.

Because of the communicative nature of drama, a number of parallels can be drawn between drama and language learning. These parallels have now formed the foundation for many innovative language teaching

methods. Although the range of possible dramatic activities is broad, a review of the literature reveals that most of the dramatic techniques being successfully employed fit into one of three distinct categories:

1.) The Dramatic Teacher

2.) Creative Drama

3.) Foreign Language Theater

These three ways of applying drama to language teaching differ not only in the language learning strategies they employ but also in the ways they foster the positive affective conditions needed for language learning. Other aspects of communication, such as register, non-verbal communication and culture are also handled very differently within these three categories. The following overview describes how each of these three applications are put to use in the classroom and elaborates on the strengths and effects of each one.

The Dramatic Teacher

In "The Missing Link In ESL Training", Edward Justen recognizes the importance of the teacher's personality and energy level in the English as a Second Language classroom. Justen suggests that through a course in drama training, teachers can increase their self awareness through the voice and body movement exercises that are characteristic of drama courses. Because the voice and body are vital in communication, it is important that language teachers become aware of their talents and take full advantage of them in the classroom. By getting to know themselves better through various drama exercises, teachers can learn to present themselves with confidence and genuinely express themselves, both verbally and non-verbally. (Justen 1984)

The benefits of this type of training are best illustrated by John Rassias' example. A former actor himself, Rassias realized that teachers could expand their teaching resources through acting techniques. When he was asked to teach French to Peace Corps volunteers at Dartmouth College during the 1960's, he had an opportunity to develop this idea.

The language program he devised, known as the Dartmouth Intensive Language Model, is now being used at over fifty-eight colleges and universities. (Homer and Stansfield, 1980)

The primary element that makes this method unique is the dramatic behavior of the "Master Teacher". Rassias, the original Master Teacher, maintains his students' attention and instills a desire to communicate through emotional portrayals of various characters. Costumes, props and other special effects all add to his stimulating portrayals of characters such as French authors and notable historical figures. The discourse of these characters provides a meaningful and memorable context for the new foreign language material, while the emotional performance creates an intimate atmosphere in which true communication can flourish. And communication does flourish. As Rassias' characters interact physically with individual students in the audience, the students are forced to respond spontaneously to the many personally relevant issues these characters raise. By providing an example of "uninhibited suppleness", Rassias forces all personal barriers to drop. Communication and community become the goals of the group.

Although this type of presentation may seem too advanced for beginning language students, the presentation of the new material is carefully arranged so that concrete concepts are introduced first and then related to universal issues. All new material presented by the Master Teacher is later reinforced in drill sessions conducted by student "Apprentice Teachers." In these sessions, small groups of students are rapidly questioned in a rhythmic manner. This forces the students to maintain a high level of concentration and maximizes the number of opportunities each student has to speak the language. In addition to the drill sessions, the Apprentice Teachers also coordinate other communicative activities for the students such as mock press conferences, charades, and T.V. game shows. (These types of activities are discussed in the section on Creative Drama.) Students participating in the Dartmouth Intensive Language Program have additional opportunities to practice the language at the language dormatories. Also, after ten weeks of language study, students in the program are given the option to continue their language studies abroad.

All of these components reflect the broad way in which Rassias defines foreign language education. Not only does he want his students to learn to use the

foreign language for meaningful communication, but he also wishes to involve the students actively in their own education. The importance he places on cultural orientation and on the appreciation of the communication of ideas in great foreign literature reflects his desire to have his students perceive the study of foreign languages as more than the memorization of vocabulary and grammar.

The success of the method depends largely on the sincerity and the intensity of the Master Teacher's performance. The Master Teacher must convince the students of the foreign language's importance by exhibiting enthusiasm for the material and dedication to the students. By rewarding student input with dramatic embraces and by showing disbelief and disappointment when students fail to master the material, Rassias shows the students that he cares about their progress. He maintains a high level of energy and maximally uses all personal and material resources to facilitate the learning process. (Rassias 1970)

Evidently, this combination of elements works. In "All the Class a Stage", Stan Luxemburg reports that after one year, students learning by this method scored as high on the Foreign Service Institute's language proficiency tests as students with four

years of language classes taught by other methods. He also mentions that listening and reading scores rose as a result of the Dartmouth method. Besides the success of the method, the classes have become so popular that enrollments have risen to almost full capacity. (Luxemburg 1978) Another apparent result of involvement with this method is a noticeable rise in both student and teacher morale. Teachers report that students are not only pleased with the steady progress they make, but they also become more involved with the activities of the language department. (Rassias 1970)

There are a number of factors that contribute to the method's success. Most importantly, the emphasis on the communication of meaningful material allows the students to use the language in realistic situations. Little attention is paid to pronunciation and register for fear that this would inhibit student input. The intensity of the Master Teacher's interaction with the students forces the students to respond spontaneously. The Master Teacher and the students reveal their personal feelings as well as their strengths and weaknesses. This self disclosure helps to create a feeling of community in the classroom that provides support for the students as they work on developing their language ability. Also, the student

apprentice teachers add to the effectiveness of the method by providing the students with peer models of language proficiency.

Aside from the ways in which the method creates favorable affective conditions for learning, the method applies a variety of language learning strategies that have proven to be successful. Obviously, the suspense and action of the Master Teacher's performance each day help the students maintain a high level of interest. Because many of the performances are emotional and related to topics of universal interest, the students begin to view the language as a viable means of expressing ideas that are personally relevant to them. The Master Teacher's presentations always focus on the here and now, and never on the far away, foreign countries in which the language is spoken.

Also, the presentation of the new material in context provides the students with associations that can facilitate the learning of the new material. The method places little emphasis on homework, but compensates for this by providing each student with many opportunities to speak in both the Master Teacher's and the Apprentice Teacher's classes. In the sessions with the Apprentice Teacher, all new material is reinforced through frequent oral drilling and testing. An

additional benefit of having both Master and Apprentice teachers is the fact that the students are exposed to more than one model of speech. By witnessing the language's ability to adapt to different styles of speech and different personalities the students become more confident of its ability to genuinely express their own ideas.

Although Rassias' personality and dedication play an important role in the success of this method, his techniques have been successfully taught to other teachers and transferred to other programs. In the mid-1970's the Exxon Education Foundation helped finance dissemination of this innovative method. One program that began as a result of the Exxon grant is described in Otto Johnston's article "The Intensive Language Model at Florida" (Johnston 1980). Since every Master Teacher cannot be expected to have the acting talent of John Rassias, the co-ordinators of the University of Florida's program devised other techniques that maintain the dramatic elements of the original method. At the University of Florida the Master Teacher presents new material such as grammar and vocabulary in a fairly traditional manner. However, each day the lesson is routinely interrupted by "visitors" who integrate the material that has just been presented

into the discourse of the interruption. These visitors, who represent characters from the history or literature of the countries in which the language is spoken, all fluently speak the language. Like the Master Teacher in the Dartmouth method, these visitors interact with the students and bring emotion and action to the language classroom.

Although the Dartmouth Intensive Language Model has been used at other colleges and universities, there is no available evidence of its use with younger language learners. Nevertheless, teachers of young language learners, such as teachers of English as a Second Language in this country, can and should integrate some of Rassias' dramatic techniques into their teaching repertoires. Some teachers have devised ways of using drama to elicit speech from their young language students. Peter Carels suggests that teachers supplement their teaching practices with the use of pantomime. By silently miming a series of gestures, teachers can draw a wide range of spontaneous communicative utterances out of the students. Students who normally fear speaking out in class lose their fear when the task becomes a group effort to interpret the teacher's actions.

Carels goes on to make a number of recommendations to the teacher concerning the use of pantomime in the class. He suggests that the material for the pantomime be limited to actions and events that the students can describe with the vocabulary they have previously learned. Also, because certain things, like emotions and physical actions, can be pantomimed more easily than events that involve time or complexed interpersonal relationships, teachers should be careful to select appropriate material and to rehearse prior to the performance. The miming teacher should always make each movement unambiguous. Confusing actions may cause the students to loose their concentration and enthusiasm. A nod of the head or a hand signal can be used by the teacher to signal that one action has been correctly interpreted and the next action has begun. When the students have guessed an action but the grammar or syntax is incorrect, the teacher may choose to halt the presentation's progress until the students have cooperatively worked out a more appropriate response. Brief routines of up to five minutes tend to work best. (Carels 1981)

Another way teachers can use drama to elicit speech from young language learners is by using puppets. In "A Puppet Theatre for Language Learning",

David Rowlands describes his experiences with the use of puppets in the language classroom. One activity that maintains the students' attention while encouraging them to participate verbally involves lovable but rather helpless puppet characters. From behind the puppet stage, the teacher manipulates puppet characters who may be either colorblind, hard of hearing, or lost. These puppet characters ask the students questions that are designed to reinforce material that the teacher has recently presented in class. Rowlands also describes activities in which the students manipulate the puppets as the teacher narrates the action of a story or fable. This activity tests the students' abilities to listen and understand the spoken language. (Rowlands 1965)

The foregoing examples reveal ways teachers can integrate drama into their teaching repertoire and expand their teaching resources. Emotional character portrayals, pantomime and puppetry are all effective ways of reaching student audiences and presenting or reviewing material. Although dramatic techniques are not technical or costly, they provide the teacher with creative ways of testing both listening and speaking proficiency. Students enjoy participating in dramatic activities and their positive attitudes are reflected in their progress.

Creative Drama

Perhaps the most flexible use of drama in the foreign language classroom is the use of creative drama. Creative drama involves the students directly in improvisational activities. In these activities, the focus is on developing a communicative situation, such as a reenactment of a story, a student improvised plot or even meaningful nonverbal interactions. The teacher's role is to create a safe atmosphere for self expression and to guide the students as they explore the various roles and modes of communication. Since the emphasis is on the process of creating the drama, there are no rehearsals or public performances.

In Creative Drama for the Classroom Teacher Ruth Beall Heinig and Lyda Stillwell describe what they consider to be the goals of creative drama. Although they were not thinking specifically in terms of creative drama's goals in the foreign language classroom, the ones they discuss have important applications to the language learning situation. (Heinig and Stillwell 1981)

One goal they discuss is the development of language and communication. Since creative drama

activities involve group interaction, the student participants are presented with many opportunities to develop their abilities to interact personally with other people. This is particularly important to language students who must learn to express themselves effectively as well as understand other people. With the limitations language learners have on their verbal abilities, it is also very important for them to become sensitive to non-verbal cues and their culturally linked interpretations.

The development of problem solving skills and creativity are also very important to language students. Students learning a new language must creatively use the limited language resources they have acquired to communicate with other people. They must constantly assess the effectiveness of their ability to communicate and, when communication fails, they must try various alternative ways of expressing themselves. Heinig and Stillwell cite a few studies that indicate that participation in creative drama helps students develop problem solving skills and creativity. Since these skills are also common characteristics of good language learners, it is worthwhile for teachers to integrate creative drama into their teaching routines so that these skills can be developed.

Another goal of creative drama is to help students develop positive self concepts. When people feel positive about themselves, they feel more confident about expressing themselves to others. Developing proficiency in a foreign language depends so much on using the language that it is extremely important that language students feel free to express themselves. Teachers can help create a comfortable atmosphere for students' self expression by showing each student that his or her contributions to the activity are important and appreciated. Since people's self concept is closely linked to the verbal expression of their personality, teachers must be careful not to inhibit student input by criticising or correcting student utterances.

Other important goals of creative drama are empathy and social awareness. Through creative drama, students have the opportunity to explore roles and circumstances they normally would not have an opportunity to experience. By doing this, they become more aware of life from another person's perspective. Activities of this kind can help students realize the similarities between people who come from very different backgrounds. Empathy is an important characteristic in language learners for two reasons. Within

the language classroom, developing empathy is important because empathic students will be more understanding and accepting of others in the class and this will create a better environment for self expression. Empathy is also important because language learners must learn to identify with the speakers of the language they are learning. When students perceive the native speakers of the language positively, they have more interest in them and in learning to communicate with them.

Another goal of creative drama is the clarification of values and attitudes. Because creative drama involves improvisational activities, the student participants are often placed in the position of making decisions that affect the outcome of the drama activity. Since these decisions only affect the drama activity and not the students' real lives, they have the flexibility to explore alternative behaviors and to experience the results of their actions. Activities of this kind can give students the opportunity to re-evaluate their attitudes and make changes that may assist the language learning process. The rate of students' progress in language learning is often affected by their attitudes. Students' attitudes toward why they are learning the language, toward the language and

its native speakers and toward their perception of what behaviors are acceptable for themselves all affect language learning. A sensitive teacher can guide the students in creative drama activities which help the students re-examine attitudes that may be hindering their progress.

Although some of the benefits of creative drama have been empirically studied, there have been only a few studies that specifically examine the effects of creative drama on language learners. One such study, "Why Drama Works: A Psycholinguistic Perspective" by Susan L. Stern, examines the psychological factors that explain why creative drama activities appear to improve language learners' oral competence. To help uncover these psychological factors, Stern analysed the results of informal questionnaires that were distributed to students and teachers who had recently participated in language classes that involved drama activities.

Since it has been assumed that drama activities can facilitate communicative competence, not only in language education but also in psychotherapy and speech therapy, Stern was interested in determining which factors were responsible for drama's success. The five factors she uncovered through the analysis of

her data were heightened self esteem, motivation and spontaneity, increased capacity for empathy and lowered sensitivity to rejection. Her review of the literature in language education, psychotherapy and speech therapy shows how each of these factors is important in the development of comunicative competence (Stern 1980).

Another study, "The Effects of Creative Drama In English as a Second Language" by Kathie Vitz focuses specifically on the effects of drama on child language learners. Vitz compares the performances of two groups of children learning English as a second language. The experimental group attended creative drama sessions that emphasized verbal and non-verbal expression through movement, sensory awareness, pantomime and story dramatization. The control group experienced the same amount of English instruction through the Audio-Lingual method, a method which emphasizes listening to, repeating and transforming grammatical structures.

To find out the differences in the performances of each group, the experimenter performed pre- and post-tests on each child individually. The children were asked to look at a wordless picture book and tell the story in their own words. A comparison of the pre- and post-test results shows that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control

group in its total verbal output and its mean length of communication utterances. Although the study has its limitations, the results suggest that language instruction that includes opportunities for interaction and meaningful communication is effective in stimulating syntactic growth. (Vitz 1984)

One other study concerning the effects of drama on language learners involves participants in "English Through Drama" (E.T.D.), an active approach to language learning developed by Mark Rittenburg and Penelope Kreitzer. Rittenberg and Kreitzer have developed a series of creative drama activities that include both non-verbal warm-up exercises and verbal language activities. Patti Golan reports in her article "English Through Drama in the Israeli Classroom" that student participants in E.T.D. are reported to have achieved higher scores than non-E.T.D. participants on the Ilyin Oral Interview test (Golan 1982).

This improvement in oral proficiency reflects the appropriateness of the three goals Rittenberg and Kreitzer have set in their development of the E.T.D. technique. The first goal is teacher training. Teachers who wish to use E.T.D. in the classroom are urged to attend workshops in which they have the

opportunity to explore their talents through exercises in voice, movement, mime and monologues. These workshops are designed to provide the teachers with an opportunity for positive personal growth as well as to train the teachers to be more effective communicators and more creative manipulators in the classroom.

The second goal focuses on making the classroom atmosphere more conducive to learning. Many of the activities involve group interaction which helps create a sense of actual support and trust among the students. The activities are arranged so that low risk activities precede activities that involve more intense self disclosure. In this atmosphere, the students become involved in high interest activities that allow them to release their energy in creative and productive ways.

The third goal is to improve students' self-confidence in speaking a foreign language by training them to co-ordinate physical movements with verbal messages. The beginning level activities involve non-verbal communicative exchanges through the use of the eyes, hands, face and posture. Gradually, activities are introduced in which these modes of communication are combined with appropriate verbal messages. After the students master combining non-verbal and verbal

communication in creative drama activities, dramatic interpretations of poems, monologues, and short scenes are used as a final test of their ability to effectively combine both verbal and non-verbal communication. A suggested sequence of E.T.D. activities is described in English Through Drama by John Dennis, Suzanne Griffin and Robert Wills 1981.

Like the E.T.D. material, Drama Techniques in Language Learning by Alan Maley and Alan Duff includes a series of communicative creative drama activities. However, in addition to non-verbal warm-up exercises and verbal language exercises, Maley and Duff expand on this format by including additional activities, focusing on specific skills that language learners must develop. For example, Maley and Duff have developed activities that focus specifically on the skills of observation and interpretation. Since language learners are limited in their verbal skills, they must learn to maximize their abilities to observe and interpret all kinds of signals in communicative situations. In addition to these exercises, Maley and Duff have also developed exercises that stress creativity, invention and problem solving, all of which are important skills in developing language proficiency. (Maley and Duff 1982)

The concept of problem solving is the primary focus in "sociodrama," a dramatic technique that Robin Scarcella recommends to foreign language teachers. A sociodrama is a role play activity in which the students are asked to act out a solution to a dilemma in human relations. Like other verbal creative drama activities the sociodrama integrates new vocabulary and grammatical structures in a meaningful context. However, since the goal of the activity is for the students to resolve the conflict, their attention is drawn toward generating a solution to an urgent problem and drawn away from perfecting the grammar of their verbal exchanges. This focus on the conflict allows the students to be less inhibited and more spontaneous in their verbal exchanges as well as more creative in the use of their verbal and non-verbal resources. (Scarcella 1978)

To make the sociodrama activity more accessible to foreign language teachers, Bill Grant has collected a variety of appropriate stories and arranged a series of activities that relate the sociodrama to other language skills. In his book Talking Behind Masks, Grant presents twenty sociodramas which are carefully graded in terms of vocabulary and conceptual difficulty. The activities based on each sociodrama

provide enough material for two one hour class sessions.

During the first class session, the teacher introduces the topic of the chosen sociodrama by asking the students personal questions that relate the topic to the students' own lives. Then, relevant new vocabulary is presented and explained before the teacher relays the situation of the sociodrama to the students in the form of an oral anecdote. Following the presentation of the anecdote, the teacher questions the students to assure that they have understood the story and the characters. Next, several students assume the roles of the characters in the sociodrama and begin enacting the resolution of the conflict from the point at which the anecdote left off. After the conflict has been resolved, both the student participants and the student observers discuss the solution acted out by the student actors. If students in the class have ideas about alternative solutions to the conflict, these may also be acted out by different student actors.

The following day, during the second class session, the teacher tests the students on the new vocabulary words by re-reading the anecdote with blanks in the places of the new vocabulary words. The

students must supply the appropriate word that fits in the context of the sentence. The students are then asked to write a character analysis of the sociodrama's characters as they perceive them. After the character analysis activity, the students are grouped in pairs and asked to write a dialogue between two of the characters. The dialogues may also be read aloud as a class activity. As a final activity, small groups of students are asked to discuss the issue that created the conflict in the situation of the sociodrama. After they come to a consensus concerning the best resolution of the conflict, each group presents its position to the class. (Grant 1983)

This sequence of activities illustrates the variety of ways in which drama activities can be integrated into the curriculum and related to other important communication skills such as vocabulary, reading and writing. Another important aspect of communication which can also be integrated into creative drama activities is an understanding of the differences in register or levels of speech relating to social roles. Since people play many different roles in everyday interactions with others, it is important that language learners understand how different roles influence the kinds of language they use. Not only do people assume

many different roles in their social interactions but they also use language to serve a variety of functions. Asking for information, making suggestions and giving directives are just a few of the ways in which language functions vary depending on a person's role in a situation. It is very important for language learners to become familiar with these subtle communication differences. In "Scenarios, Discourse, and Real-Life Roles" Robert DiPietro suggests that these levels of communication be stressed in the language classroom through the use of the open-ended scenario, a role play technique which is very similar to the sociodrama. By assigning students roles in which they are forced to utilize the different functions of language, the students are more apt to gain an understanding of how these types of communication are used in real life situations. For example, teachers can design open-ended scenarios in which students assume roles in relationships such as buyers and sellers, parents and children or boyfriends and girlfriends. Like the sociodrama, the students are expected to resolve the open-ended scenario, while maintaining the type of communication appropriate to their roles in the situation. By participating in and witnessing the enactments of the relationships, the differences in the

types of communication exchanges become more obvious and more natural. (Di Pietro 1981)

Unfortunately, there is very little information in the language learning publications concerning the use of creative drama with child language learners. However, it is not a new or uncommon phenomenon. In 1903, the first children's theatre in America was established at the Educational Alliance in New York City for the children of immigrant families on the lower east side. This theatre was very successful in exposing drama's potential as a tool for teaching languages and, since that time many other programs have adopted the use of creative drama in children's foreign language programs. (McCaslin 1984)

In Creative Dramatics for All Children, Emily Gillies elaborates on the creative drama activities that are commonly used with children who are learning English as a second language. When children are unfamiliar with the language being spoken around them, they tend to retreat into silence. It is the teacher's responsibility to help the children feel comfortable, even if this means encouraging them to speak in their native language. At this early stage, all modes of expression are encouraged, including art work or any other activity that helps them explore their senses.

Eventually, when the students can understand enough spoken English, the teacher encourages the children to pantomime the characters and actions from their favorite stories. Students who are ready to attempt expressing themselves in English may wish to mimic the voices of the characters as well. It is important that the teacher be accepting of the children's efforts to express themselves, particularly their attempts to express themselves in English. As the children gain confidence in their ability to communicate verbally, the use of puppet theatre and story dramatizations are very successful with young language learners. (Gillies 1973)

Although all of the drama activities mentioned are very useful for providing language students with opportunities for meaningful communication, the success of these activities also depends on the effectiveness of the teacher. Teachers using creative drama must be very sensitive to their students' needs and must co-ordinate activities that will help the students develop the skills that are most needed at their various stages of development. To do this, teachers must be creative in their use of material resources and they must set an example by exhibiting the many ways in which the voice and the body can be

used to enhance communication. Teachers must maintain a high energy level and show both their enjoyment of the activities and their dedication to their students' progress. The teacher must create a classroom atmosphere that is supportive of self-expression. In classes that focus on creative drama activities, the teacher becomes less of an authority figure and assumes the role of an advisor or coach. Students' verbal utterances are always encouraged and they are only corrected when they are incomprehensible. (Duffala 1985)

Another important suggestion that Maley and Duff make to teachers who wish to use creative drama in the language classroom is to know when to end an activity. It is recommended that creative drama activities be cut off while students are still at an energetic level of involvement. By ending the activity before the excitement dies down, the students are more apt to channel their remaining energy into a class discussion concerning the direction their activity was taking. In a language class, this type of verbal class participation is also valuable in developing the students' oral proficiency. Also, if the creative drama activities are stopped before the students lose

interest, they are more likely to look forward to doing this type of activity again. (Maley and Duff 1982)

John Oller makes another suggestion in "Story Writing Principles and E.S.L. Teaching." He suggests that teachers become familiar with the structure and sequencing principles of story writing. This is particularly important to teachers who wish to integrate creative drama activities in the curriculum. Certain elements of effective story writing, such as interesting characters, meaningful conflicts, action and elements of surprise, are essential in designing workable creative drama activities. Teachers who are aware of the importance of these elements and who practice making them a regular part of the classroom activities are sure to benefit by maintaining the students' interest in the creative drama activities. (Oller 1983)

Another important element in the success of creative drama in the language classroom is the space in which these activities take place. Because movement is an important part of many of the communication exercises, an open area is necessary so that the students can express themselves freely. Also, since communication is the focus of these activities, it is important that all of the students be able to see and

interact with each other. The absence of rows of desks and chairs helps the students forget the orderly and disciplined atmosphere they normally associate with education and allows them to approach the creative drama activities with an open mind. (Maley and Duff 1982)

The foregoing review of creative drama's applications in the field of foreign language education illustrates the utility and flexibility of this particular dramatic technique. Improvisational activities allow the language learner to experience communicative situations that resemble real life activities, while relieving them of the responsibilities of real life circumstances. The non-verbal activities also help the language learners by teaching them to expand their communicative resources. Because creative drama is limitless in the number of ways it can be applied to communicative situations, it is an excellent way to get students actively involved in the development of their foreign language proficiency.

Foreign Language Theatre

Another way to use drama with language learners is to stage a play in the foreign language. In doing this, the entire language class gets involved in various aspects of the production, from acting to lighting and scene design. The teacher becomes the director and all direction is given in the foreign language. Since public performance is the goal, all of the students are motivated to work together.

Because the script and the play's direction may include complexed language use, this method is inappropriate for beginning language learners. However, intermediate and advanced level language learners can benefit in a number of ways from involvement in this kind of activity. A carefully chosen play can provide a model of natural speech in the context of a meaningful and interesting situation. Also, dialogues between characters in different social roles illustrate the ways in which the levels and functions of language change according to the situation.

In addition to giving students exposure to various aspects of the foreign language, the play also provides a context for cultural information. A well

directed play will reflect the foreign culture not only in the characters' language and behavior but also in the story and the setting. Some foreign language programs using theatre as language learning experience take the cultural aspect to an extreme by immersing the audience in various aspects of the foreign culture. In "German Cafe-Theatre: A Venture in Experiential Learning", Harriet Semke describes the way in which intermediate and advanced level German students at Westmar College use the occasion of a German play to create an evening of German festivities. To be admitted to the play, patrons must first exchange dollars for marks and pfennigs at "the border." This money is then used for admission into the theatre. Once inside the theatre, the patrons are seated at cafe tables and served German pastries by costumed waiters. German music and dancing set the mood prior to the beginning of the performance. (Semke 1980)

Although not all language programs put that much effort into foreign language theatre productions, some language teachers do design their language courses entirely around the production of a play. Richard Via is perhaps the most well known educator to do so. Via was not originally a language educator, but rather a man with twenty years of experience as a theatre

professional. He became involved in language teaching while in Japan as a Fulbright lecturer in theatre. When he realized that his students had not enrolled in his course due to a genuine interest in theatre, but rather as a means of improving their English, the Via method was created.

To prepare his students for their involvement in a dramatic production, Via engages the students in voice and body movement activities. He also recommends that teachers use exercises that stress relaxation, concentration, imagination and observation. Prior to introducing the script, Via presents students with dialogues that only include one speaker's part. The student actors are asked to read the dialogue silently and make eye contact with their partner as they speak their part of the dialogue. They must listen carefully to the other person's response so that they can correctly interpret the meaning behind their own half of the dialogue. This technique was devised so that the students would be forced to listen and communicate with one another and to not simply be allowed to read their lines. (Via 1976)

Similar dialogue exercises are now available in Yoko Nomura's book Pinch and Ouch. A former student of Richard Via's, Nomura has established an English

school in Japan that uses Via's methods for teaching English. In adapting his practice dialogue exercise, Nomura has expanded his dialogue format to include exercises that allow the students to select variations in their responses in a dialogue, forcing the students to listen carefully to their partner so that they will answer with a logical response. (Nomura 1982)

After the different warm up exercises, the director is ready to introduce the script. Although the students do learn some grammar and vocabulary through their exposure to the script, the real improvement in their language proficiency comes from their work on the pronunciation, intonation and stress. The director works with the students until they can deliver their lines in a natural way. As the students become more comfortable with their lines, the director must focus on coordinating the appropriate body movements and facial expressions. Since body language is culturally determined, it is important that the director pay close attention to these non-verbal aspects of communication so that the actors' presentations seem accurate. (Via 1976)

Since many language teachers are unfamiliar with the procedures involved in play production, several resource books have been written that fully

explain all aspects of applying theatre techniques in the language classroom. Steven Smith's book The Theatre Arts and the Teaching of Second Languages (1984) and John McRae's book Using Drama in the Classroom (1985) both elaborate technical details such as choosing a play, developing the set and arranging rehearsals. Because it is not always possible for teachers to work an entire play into the curriculum, Smith and McRae make suggestions concerning shorter activities that capture the essential elements of foreign language theatre.

Many of these shorter activities are now being used in drama laboratories, a type of language laboratory in which the older methods of using electronic equipment have been replaced by active language learning methods. Susan Cernyak and Robert Reimer report that the installation of a drama laboratory for language students has been very successful at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Students are assisted with pronunciation, intonation and stress as they work cooperatively on scenes from plays. (Cernyak and Reimer 1980) Sylvia Taba Warner expands on the drama laboratory format by including a system of coaching and critiquing the student participants. With the help of a video tape recorder, students are able to

witness their weaknesses and improve their performances. (Warner 1978)

Although the foreign language theatre method of teaching foreign languages does not give the students the opportunity to spontaneously create their own utterances, it is still an important tool for helping students concentrate on other important aspects of communication. Intermediate and advanced level language learners need to pay special attention to pronunciation, intonation, and stress. Mastery of these skills, even within the context of a memorized script, helps the students develop an understanding of their appropriate applications in everyday usage. Also mastering the proper emotional expressions and the physical movements that correspond to different types of verbal expressions is also an important aspect of becoming proficient in a foreign language. Most importantly, the enjoyment of the cooperative involvement in foreign language theatre maintains students' interest and motivation.

Conclusion

This review of the three main ways in which drama techniques are applied in language education illustrates the different ways in which teachers can expand their teaching resources. Teachers who have used these techniques testify that student interest and motivation increase as a result of their use and, consequently, the students progress more rapidly in their language acquisition. However, since each of these three techniques focuses on different aspects of language and communication, it is important that teachers thoroughly understand the benefits of each technique and that they carefully choose the drama technique that best meets the needs of their students.

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VITA

Marsha Lee Miller was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on September 26, 1959, the daughter of Marilyn Strehlow Miller and Jay Murray Miller. After completing her work at Rockville High School in Vernon, Connecticut, she entered the University of Connecticut at Storrs, Connecticut. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in French and the degree of Bachelor of Science with a major in Rehabilitation Services from the University of Connecticut in December 1982. During the following years she was employed as a teaching assistant at Saint Edward's University in Austin, Texas. In January 1985, she entered the Graduate School of the University of Texas.

Permanent address: 9 Grandview Terrace
Rockville, Connecticut

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